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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 129  
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to designate a certain bridge on State Route 255  
in Davidson County as the "Lee-Steedman  
Bridge".

WHEREAS, from time to time, this General Assembly has seen fit to name certain  
highways and bridges to honor the memory of those heroic persons who made significant  
contributions to Tennessee's panoramic history; and

WHEREAS, Major General James Blair Steedman, USA and Lieutenant General  
Stephen Dill Lee, CSA traveled divergent paths to their fateful meeting at Peach Orchard Hill  
during the Battle of Nashville on December 16, 1864; and

WHEREAS, the youngest lieutenant general in the service of the Confederate States  
Army, Stephen D. Lee was a member of the negotiating party that rowed out to Fort Sumter to  
ask one last time for the removal of federal troops from the Confederate harbor entrance prior to  
the outbreak of the War Between the States; and

WHEREAS, a West Point graduate, Lt. General Lee's military profession was the  
artillery, although he distinguished himself in cavalry and infantry operations as well; and

WHEREAS, he served with Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia through the  
Sharpsburg campaign; and

WHEREAS, after Vicksburg surrendered, Stephen Lee was given command of all the  
cavalry operations in Mississippi, Alabama and western Tennessee where he worked closely

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with legendary Confederate cavalry officer, Nathan Bedford Forrest; in fact, he was one of the few West Point officers who Forrest respected; and

WHEREAS, In June 1864, he was again transferred to serve as an infantry corps commander in Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee in the hundred days battle for Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, General Lee then brought his troops northward with General John Bell Hood on his Tennessee campaign in the fall of 1864, and was subsequently heavily engaged while defending the Confederate eastern flank in the Battle of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his courageous leadership on the battlefield, Stephen D. Lee was also an innovator in the fields of agriculture and education and distinguished himself as a dedicated public servant after the war; and

WHEREAS, after the fall of the Confederacy, he returned to Mississippi, married and became involved in scientific agricultural research; and

WHEREAS, after the Reconstruction government was driven from the state, he was elected to the state senate and served as the first president of Mississippi A & M, today known as Mississippi State University; and

WHEREAS, Stephen D. Lee served as one of the committee chairman in the formation of the Vicksburg National Military Park; he remained active in the United Confederate Veterans and helped to form the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1896; and

WHEREAS, James Blair Steedman was, like his counterpart, a man of numerous talents and interests, working as a printer and newspaperman, joining the California Gold Rush, and serving in the state legislature and U.S. military at various times in his life; and

WHEREAS, after serving two terms in the Ohio State legislature and working as the proprietor of the *Toledo Times*, James Steedman became active in Democratic politics; and

WHEREAS, he served as a delegate to two Democratic conventions and won the Democratic nomination for a U.S. Congressional seat in 1860; and

WHEREAS, with the eruption of the Civil War, he raised the 14th Ohio Infantry for service and was elected its colonel; and

WHEREAS, with the 14th Ohio, he fought the Battle of Phillippi, and he served in the Battle of Mill Springs under Brigadier General George H. Thomas; and

WHEREAS, he also marched on Corinth, Mississippi under General Halleck and led a brigade in the Battle of Perryville; and

WHEREAS, as the head of the 1st Division in Major General Gordon Granger's reserve corps, General Steedman distinguished himself in the Tullahoma Campaign and at the Battle of Chickamauga, where he rallied his men in a desperate defense and miraculously escaped almost certain death; and

WHEREAS, after being promoted to Major General, he again joined General Thomas's command and led division during the Battle of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, after the war, James Steedman served as collector of Internal Revenue at New Orleans, then returned to Ohio to edit the *Northern Ohio Democrat* and subsequently served in the state senate; and

WHEREAS, he was serving as Toledo's chief of police at the time of his death; and

WHEREAS, on Friday, December 16, 1864, General Stephen D. Lee's corps was assigned to defend the right or eastern flank of the Confederate line at Peach Orchard Hill, just North of the John Overton Home, Travellers Rest; and

WHEREAS, despite heavy Union losses on the previous day, General James B. Steedman's troops were ordered to make another effort to take this Confederate stronghold on the afternoon of the 16th; and

WHEREAS, General Steedman selected Colonel Charles R. Thompson's black brigade, the 12 U.S. Colored Troops, to advance in the front line; and

WHEREAS, when the attack came, General Lee's men rose up out of their hastily dug trenches, pouring a devastating fire into the attacking waves of Union soldiers and routing the Union forces; and

WHEREAS, incredibly, the attack did not end here, as the 13th US. Colored Troops entered the fray; and

WHEREAS, courageous and heroic to the death, the inexperienced 13th U.S. Colored Troops were nevertheless destroyed by General Lee's forces; and

WHEREAS, Confederate General James Thadeus Holtzclaw was so impressed by the valor of these African-American soldiers that he formally cited their bravery in his battle report, an almost unheard-of event for a Southern general; and

WHEREAS, during that rainy afternoon, every attack launched against the Confederate position on Peach Orchard Hill ground to a halt with heavy losses; and

WHEREAS, more than one thousand Federal casualties resulted from the Peach Orchard Hill attack, representing about one-third of General Thomas's entire loss during the two days of the battle; and

WHEREAS, when the Confederate line broke on the western flank at Shy's Hill, General Lee's corps fell back down Franklin Pike, serving as the rear guard for the remnants of General Hood's shattered army; and

WHEREAS, despite the heroic service of General Lee and his troops on this fateful day, the Confederate loss at the Battle of Nashville represented, for all practical purposes, the end of the proud Army of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the historic battle for Peach Orchard Hill during the Battle of Nashville took place just west of the Harding Place interchange at Interstate 65, and it is thus appropriate that a certain bridge on State Route 255 in Davidson County be named to commemorate the courage and valor of these two brilliant generals, who fought with equal honor, passion and distinction for two different causes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That as a reminder of our proud heritage and as a tribute to the valor and bravery of both Confederate and Union forces during the Battle of Nashville, the bridge that spans the East Branch of Brown's Creek and Interstate Highway 65 on State Route 255 (Harding Place) in Davidson County is hereby designated as the "Lee-Steedman Bridge".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable markers or to affix suitable signs designating such bridge as the "Lee-Steedman Bridge".

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.